

Program: ASTHMA

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Rockland Families Take Steps to Better Breathing

Rockland County, NY, January 2008— Four years down the road, Rockland County’s “Steps to Better Breathing” asthma management program, a home-based approach to help children and their families understand how to prevent and manage asthma attacks, has shown positive and exciting results. Sponsored by Steps to a HealthierNY, the program is the result of a collaboration between the Rockland County Department of Health (DOH), local hospitals, medical practices, Medicaid Managed Care Plans, and community members working toward one goal: minimize the suffering associated with asthma.

The Steps to Better Breathing program consists of three home visits by a Certified Home Health Aide or Nurse Practitioner who educates families on how they can prevent asthma attacks and reduce exposure to triggers in the home (dust, pets, insects, pollen, and many more.) To reach Rockland County’s diverse populations, the program was offered free of charge in English, Spanish, Creole, and Yiddish.

To date, over 100 children and their families have participated in the program. Evaluation results show significant improvement in knowledge and comfort with managing asthma; combined with significantly reduced inhaler use, sleep disruption, and limitation of activity. When a child does have an asthma attack, parents have been able to implement learned techniques to avoid having to go to the hospital – and many families are more confident and relaxed. One parent’s sentiment: *“I would have loved to have had this service available when my children were first diagnosed. Not knowing what to do for an asthma attack was very scary.”*

The results of the program can be summed up with a quote from a happy child: *“I loved the toys that show me how I can breathe. Thank you; thank you for improving my asthma. Thank you for everything you’ve done for me!”*

The Rockland County Department of Health welcomes health insurance companies to learn more about the Steps to Better Breathing program as a benefit for their members.

In addition, a campaign called ***Could It Be Asthma***, conducted in the springtime at local pharmacies, libraries and pediatrician offices, along with a commercial on various cable stations, draws attention to a persistent cough as a sign that a child could have asthma. A simple list of questions indicates whether a parent or guardian should speak to a physician about childhood asthma.

For more information call the Rockland County DOH at 845-364-2500
or visit the STEPS website at www.rocklandsteps.org